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Characteristics of recent migrants

Data about migrants arriving in the last 10 years including employment outcomes relating to visa type, birth country, education and language skills

Reference period November 2016

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Summary of findings

Overview

The Characteristics of Recent Migrants Survey provides detailed data about migrants who have come to Australia over the past 10 years and how they have fared after their arrival. The topics include how migrants settle into employment and whether their likelihood of finding work relates to their visa type, education, language skills or other characteristics.

In November 2016, the in-scope Australian population aged 15 years and over was 19.1 million people. Of these people, an estimated 6.8 million (35%) were born overseas. (Table 1)

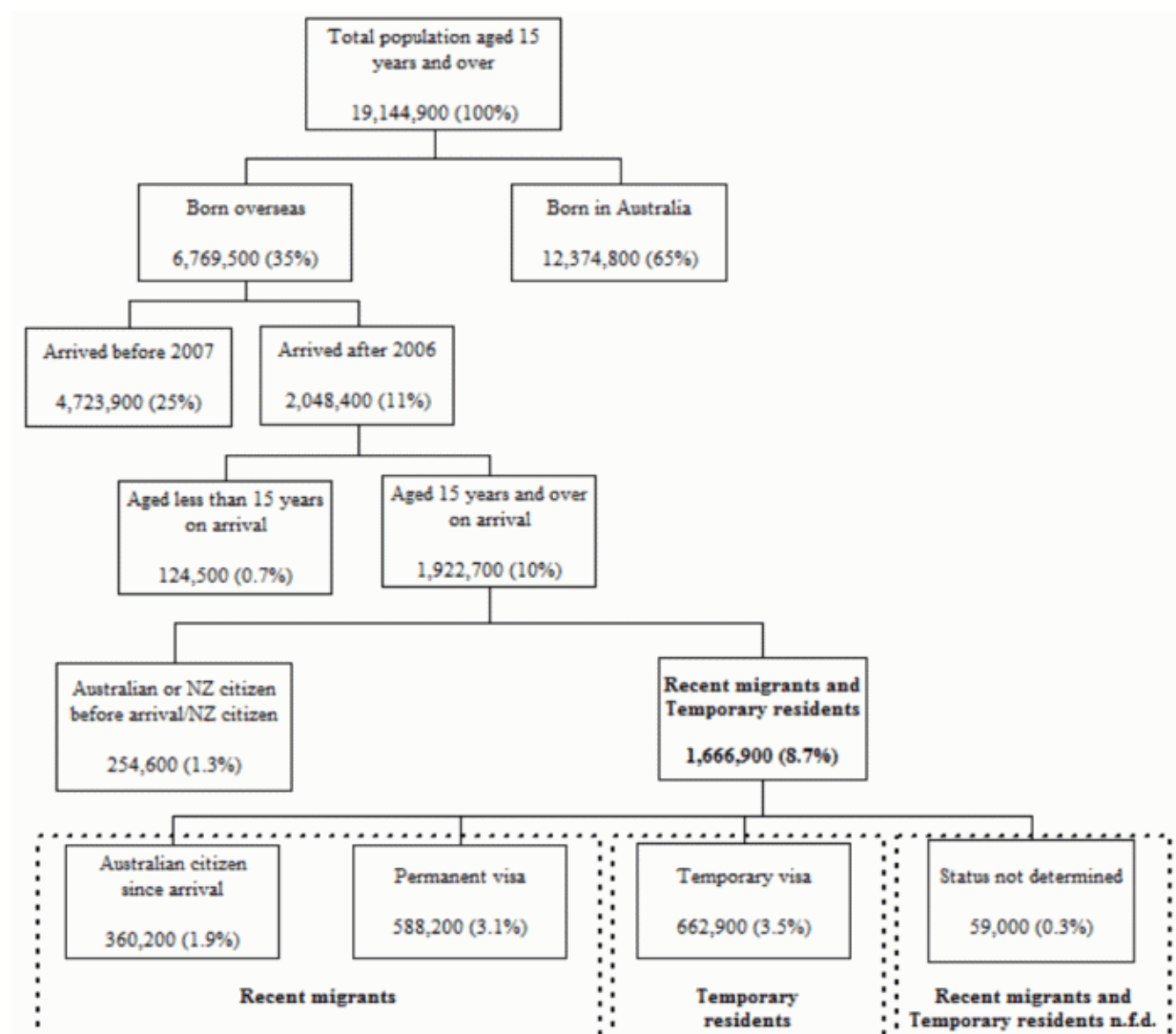
Around 1.9 million of the people born overseas arrived in Australia to live after 2006 and were aged 15 years and over on arrival. This represents 10% of the total population aged 15 years and over. Of these, 254,600 were an Australian or New Zealand citizen before arrival or held New Zealand citizenship as at November 2016. This group is not covered in this

analysis. The remaining 1.7 million people were recent migrants or temporary residents, who are the focus of this commentary. Of these:

- 57% were recent migrants (588,200 people had a permanent visa and 360,200 people were now Australian citizens)
- 40% were temporary residents (662,900 people had temporary visas). (Table 1)

The following diagram shows the estimates for each of these groups.

Persons aged 15 years and over, migration status as at November 2016



The majority (81%) of recent migrants were aged 20-44 years on arrival. Of the 662,900 temporary residents, 77% were aged 20-44 years on arrival. (Table 3)

An estimated 81% of recent migrants and temporary residents were the main applicant on their visa application form when they first arrived in Australia. (Table 5)

There were 362,300 people who had a temporary visa on arrival to live in Australia and had since obtained a permanent visa or Australian citizenship by November 2016. Of these, 53% had obtained a permanent visa while 47% had obtained Australian citizenship. Of those who had obtained a permanent visa, 61% held a Skilled visa and 33% held a Family visa. (Table 8)

Labour market outcomes

Many migration policies and visa applications are underpinned by labour market needs. To facilitate analysis of migrant labour market outcomes, respondents to the survey were asked about their employment prior to arriving in Australia, their current employment status and their occupation prior to and after arrival.

Employment

In November 2016, 65% of the 1.7 million recent migrants and temporary residents were employed. Migrants who had obtained Australian citizenship since arrival were more likely to be employed (77%) than migrants on a permanent visa (63%), or temporary residents (59%). Of those employed, 79% of people with Australian citizenship were employed full time, compared with 74% on a permanent visa and 61% of temporary residents. (Table 2)

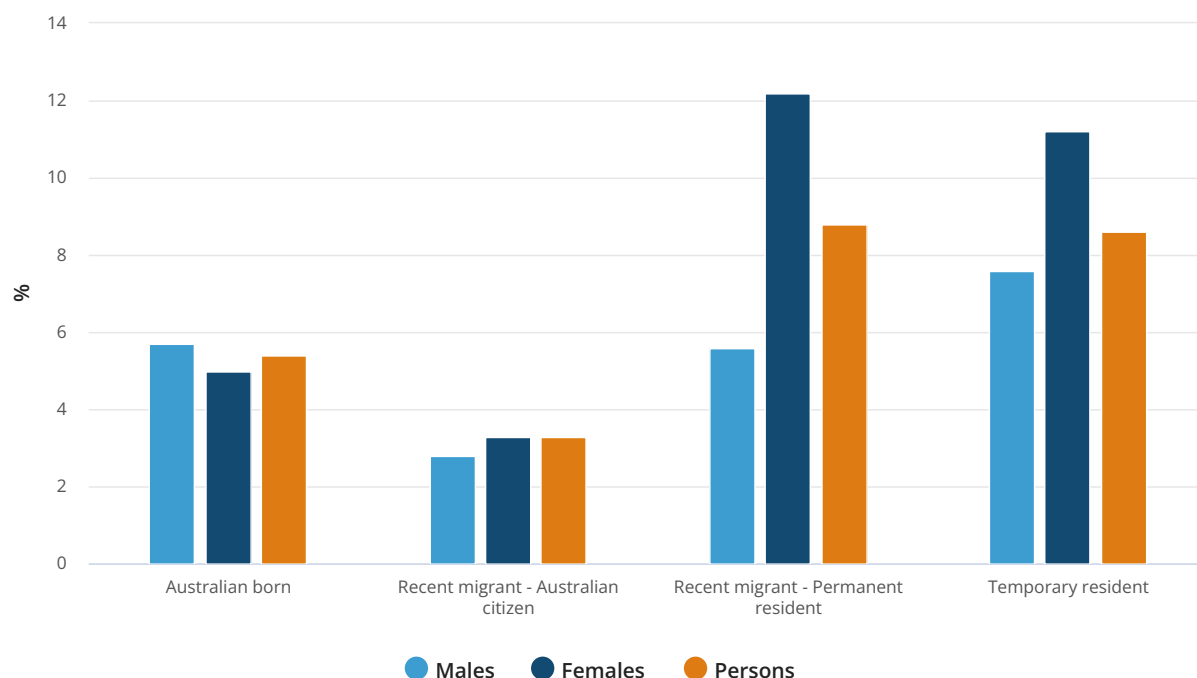
Around three quarters (75%) of Skilled migrants were employed as at November 2016. Of the Skilled migrants who were the main visa applicant, 82% were employed. About half (54%) of migrants on a Family visa and 59% of those on Other permanent visas were employed. Temporary residents on student visas were less likely to be employed than other temporary residents (50% compared with 68%). (Tables 2 and 17)

Overall, men were more likely to be employed full time than women: 87% of employed male migrants with Australian citizenship were employed full time compared with 68% of females; among employed permanent visa holders, 82% of males were employed full time compared with 66% of females; and 67% of employed male temporary residents were employed full time compared with 55% of female temporary residents. (Table 2)

Unemployment rate

The unemployment rate for recent migrants and temporary residents was 7.4%, compared with 5.4% for people born in Australia. Migrants with Australian citizenship had an unemployment rate of 3.3%, temporary residents 8.6% and recent migrants on a permanent visa 8.8%. (Table 2 and Graph 1)

Graph 1: Unemployment rate by residency type as at November 2016 and sex



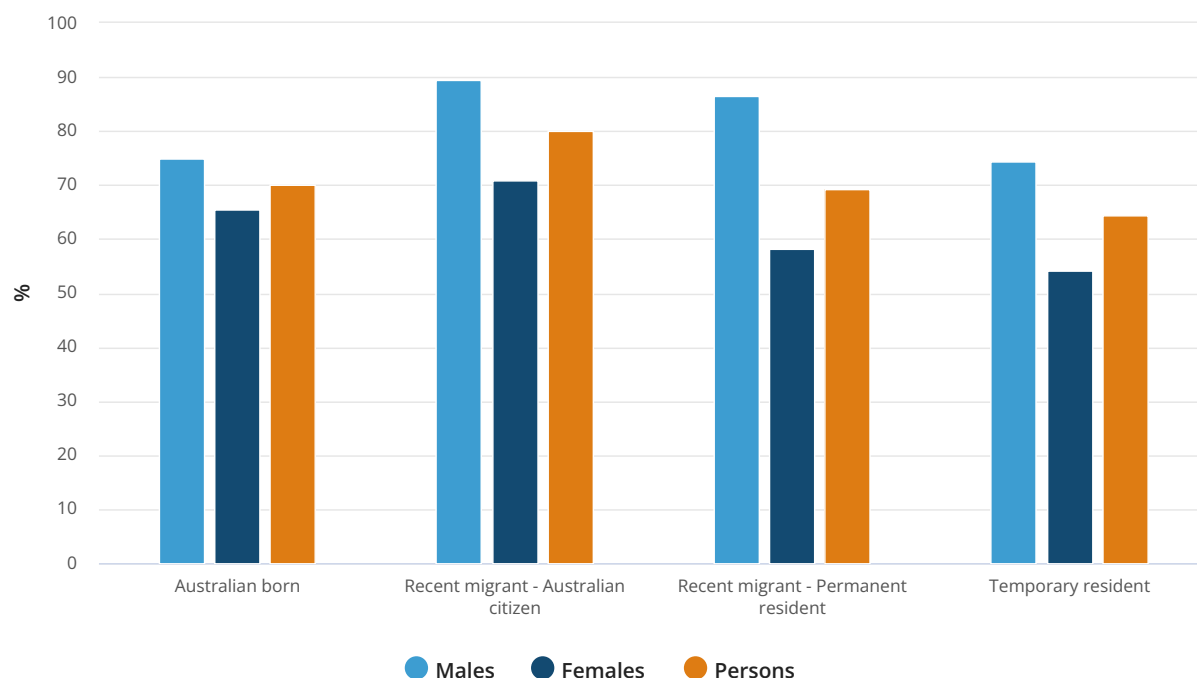
Recent migrants and temporary residents who had obtained a non-school qualification since arrival had a lower unemployment rate than those who had not (5.7% compared with 8.3%). (Table 3).

Labour force participation rate

The labour force participation rate for recent migrants and temporary residents was 70% in November 2016, while the total participation rate for Australia was 66%. Migrants who had obtained Australian citizenship since arrival had a higher labour force participation rate (80%) than permanent residents(69%) and temporary residents (65%). (Table 2)

Overall, men had a higher labour force participation rate than women: (90%) for male migrants with Australian citizenship compared with (71%) for females; (86%) for males on a permanent visa compared with (58%) for females; and 74% for males on a temporary visa compared with 54% for females. In comparison, for males and females born in Australia, the participation rates were 75% and 66% respectively. (Table 2 and Graph 2)

Graph 2: Labour force participation rate by residency type as at November 2016 and sex



The labour force participation rate was higher for those recent migrants who arrived in Australia already having obtained a non-school qualification (83%) than for those who had not (58%). It was also higher for recent migrants who obtained a non-school qualification since arrival (84%) than for those who had not (68%). (Table 3)

Finding employment

Around 9.1% of recent migrants who have had a job in Australia arrived with their first job arranged, whereas 46% spent up to three months looking for their first job. (Table 15)

An estimated 43% of recent migrants who have had a job since arrival received some form of help to find their first job. The most common sources of help were:

- 74% had help from friends or family
- 17% had help from Centrelink, a Job Network agency or Job Services Australia provider
- 4.2% had help from an educational institution (Table 15)

Around one third (31%) of recent migrants who have had a job in Australia reported experiencing some difficulty finding their first job. The most common difficulties were:

- 65% reported a lack of Australian work experience or references
- 31% reported a lack of local contacts or networks
- 25% experienced language difficulties (Table 15)

Education

The education levels of recent migrants and temporary residents can impact on their settlement outcomes during their first 10 years in Australia. Respondents were asked about qualifications they had obtained prior to arriving in Australia and if they were recognised in Australia, whether their qualifications were used in their first job and whether they had obtained any qualifications since arrival.

Recent migrants

An estimated 65% of recent migrants held a non-school qualification before arriving in Australia. Of these, 76% had a Bachelor Degree or higher, 14% had an Advanced Diploma or Diploma and 8.7% had a Certificate level qualification. (Table 3)

Over a third (36%) of recent migrants had obtained a non-school qualification after arriving in Australia. Of these, half (50%) had obtained a Bachelor Degree or higher. (Table 3)

Of the recent migrants who had a non-school qualification before arriving in Australia and who had a job since arriving in Australia, 53% had used their highest non-school qualification in their first job. Another 18% of these recent migrants had not used their highest non-school qualification in their first job, but had tried to find work more suited to their qualification. (Table 15)

One third (33%) of recent migrants who had obtained a non-school qualification before arrival had their overseas qualifications recognised in Australia. (Table 16)

Skilled visa holders

About 79% of skilled visa holders who were main applicants had a non-school qualification before arrival and 55% of these were currently employed in a job using their qualification. Of those who had not used their qualification, 26% had tried to find work more suited to their qualifications. (Table 17)

Temporary residents

An estimated 55% of temporary residents had a non-school qualification before arriving in Australia. Of these, 78% had a Bachelor Degree or higher. (Table 3)

A third (33%) of temporary residents had obtained a non-school qualification after arriving in Australia, with 61% of these completing a Bachelor Degree or higher. (Table 3)

Household income

Household income is an important indicator of people's material standard of living because income, along with wealth, can be used to support consumption of goods and services, such as food, clothing, housing and leisure activities. Respondents were asked about the sources of their household income to gauge how strongly their material standard of living is connected to their employment outcomes.

Most recent migrants (84%) reported wages and salary as their main source of household income, whereas 9.7% said Australian or overseas government pensions or allowances were their main source of household income. Almost three-quarters (73%) of temporary residents reported wages and salary as their main source of household income, but temporary residents were less likely than recent migrants to report Australian or overseas government pensions or allowances as their main source of household income (3.7%). These data should be considered in the context of the eligibility criteria related to these pensions and allowances. (Table 10)

The proportion of recent migrants and temporary entrants reporting wages or salary as their main source of household income gradually increased with length of stay in Australia. About two-thirds of the most recent arrivals (arrived 2016) reported wages and salary as their main source of household income. However, for those who arrived in 2013, the proportion was higher at 77% and for longer term arrivals (arrived from 2007 to 2008) it was higher again at 89%. (Table 10)

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Methodology

[Characteristics of Recent Migrants, Australia methodology, November 2016](#)